

The President's Radio Address *June 15, 1996*

Good morning. Tomorrow millions of Americans will reach out to their fathers in thanks. I believe being a father is the most important job a man can do. Today I want to talk with you about what our Nation can do to help fathers as they try to raise good children.

A good, strong father can make the difference between a lifetime of disappointment and anger and a lifetime of fulfillment and good parenting in turn. Children from single-parent families are twice as likely to drop out of high school, to have a child before they're 20, to live in poverty. Children who don't have a dad at home are more likely to do worse in school than those who do, regardless of their household income.

Yet in so many ways, being a father today is harder than it was when our own dads were young. Most fathers are working longer hours to help support their families. At the same time, as many women move into the workplace, many, many American fathers find themselves taking on even greater responsibilities at home.

So if we want to keep the American family strong in the 21st century, we have to support America's fathers in doing their best by their children. That's why we worked hard to pass the family and medical leave law, to cut taxes for our hardest pressed working families, why we're fighting to raise the minimum wage and to make it easier for parents to pay for their children's college education, why we're fighting to protect the Medicaid that helps working parents with children with disabilities to keep working and support their children.

In addition to supporting fathers, we should expect basic responsibilities from them. That's why we worked so hard to strengthen child support enforcement. And I'm proud that child support collections are up by 40 percent in the last 3 years.

We are also urging fathers to get more involved, along with mothers, in their children's education. In fact, this summer Education Secretary Dick Riley is enlisting fathers and mothers to keep reading to their children and reading with their children through vacation. While math and science scores have gone up in recent years, our reading scores have remained just about flat. And reading ability drops off when children are

out of school. Secretary Riley's Read-Write-Now initiative will encourage one million children to keep reading, even after the school doors close. Fathers can help to build a lifetime of memories for themselves and their children by reading with them every day. I know. On this Father's Day, all those books that I read with Chelsea together are among my most precious memories.

We also have to help parents protect their children from bad influences that come from outside the home. American parents are working overtime to keep their homes safe, to set good examples, only to have popular culture make their hard work even harder. That's why we worked hard to give parents the V-chip, so they can keep excessive violence and other inappropriate material out of their young children's TV viewing, and why we have encouraged the entertainment industry to rate their TV programs. It's why we're supporting antidrug strategies to help parents keep their children drug free.

Parents also know that, aside from television and drugs, alcohol and tobacco are two of the biggest dangers to our children. Our administration is working hard, along with tens of thousands of citizens, including so many young people in antismoking groups, to keep our children away from tobacco. Every day 3,000 kids start to smoke in this country illegally, and 1,000 of them will have their lives shortened as a result. Our administration has proposed strong rules to prevent the advertising, marketing, and sales of tobacco to children.

Now, some political leaders who oppose our efforts to restrict advertising and sales to children are saying that cigarettes are not necessarily addictive, even going so far as to compare the dangers of kids smoking to the dangers of some children drinking milk. Well, that's certainly the tobacco company line. But it was the Surgeon General, Dr. C. Everett Koop, under President Reagan who concluded nearly a decade ago that cigarettes are addictive, highly addictive. In fact, next week 130 of the Nation's top doctors and scientists are meeting to discuss how people can break free from tobacco addiction, not whether it's addictive.

So when political leaders parrot the tobacco company line, say cigarettes are not necessarily

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addictive, and oppose our efforts to keep tobacco away from our children, they continue to cater to powerful interests, but they're not standing up for parents and children. In fact, they're making the job of being a parent even harder. So on the eve of this Father's Day, I say to the tobacco industry, support our efforts to keep tobacco away from our kids. And I say to others in public life, stop fighting those efforts; you should be supporting them too.

One thing parents haven't had to worry about is their kids being exposed on television and radio to liquor advertisements. For half a century liquor companies have voluntarily kept their ads off the air for the simple reason that it was the right thing to do. So I was disappointed this week when a major company announced it would break the ban and put liquor ads on TV, exposing our children to liquor before they

know how to handle it or can legally do so. After voluntarily staying away from this for 50 years, being good corporate citizens, companies are now considering changing plans. I ask the companies to get back to the ban. Pull those ads. We appreciate your good corporate citizenship, and our parents need it to continue. Let's all resolve to make the job of being a father easier.

Tomorrow we celebrate our fathers, who every day, without fanfare or recognition, are doing the hard work it takes to be good fathers, good husbands, good citizens of our country. To all of you I say thank you, God bless you, Happy Father's Day, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:25 p.m. on June 14 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 15.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Manchester, United Kingdom

June 15, 1996

I am deeply outraged by the bomb explosion today at a shopping center in Manchester, England, which injured scores of innocent people, some very seriously. I join Prime Minister Major and Prime Minister Bruton in utterly condemning this brutal and cowardly act of terrorism. Such viciousness deserves universal condemnation. I wish the British Government every success in finding and bringing to justice those responsible.

On behalf of the American people, Hillary and I extend our deepest sympathies to the victims and their families. Our prayers are with them. We have known the shock and pain of terrorism in our country, the horror of the sudden shattering of daily life. The bombing today

underscores the need for all of us to join together to fight terrorism and violence in all parts of the world.

Last week, historic talks aimed at finding a lasting settlement to the conflict in Northern Ireland began in Belfast. The people of Northern Ireland voted to send their representatives to those talks, expressing their deep desire for peace and their commitment to democratic means of resolving their differences. The men of violence have once again tried to dash their hopes. I want the people who have so much at stake in those talks to know that the United States will stand with them in their continuing search for peace.

Statement on the Death of Ella Fitzgerald

June 15, 1996

I am deeply saddened by the death of Ella Fitzgerald. The jazz world and the Nation have suffered a tremendous loss in the passing of someone with so much talent, grace, and class.

Ella's phenomenal voice and wonderful phrasing will remain close to the hearts of Americans for generations to come. Hillary and I extend our deepest condolences to her family.